

Belonging

by Dawn

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Author: Dawn

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Category: Angst

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Summary: What happens when Scully is left to pick up the pieces after Mulder's disappearance.

Disclaimer: They aren't mine. If they were, we darn well would KNOW how Scully got pregnant.

Archive: Anywhere as long as my name and address stay attached and let me know where to visit.

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Belonging

Walter Skinner sat in the cold, hard plastic chair outside his agent's hospital room with his head in his hands. All he could see in his mind was the devastation on her face when she'd reached for his hand to tell him that she already knew he had lost the man that was the air she breathed. She'd reached for his hand. To comfort him. Not

the other way around. He was still trying to recover from that. He'd often seen her bestow her unconditional comfort on Mulder on more than one occasion, usually when he didn't deserve it or it should have been vice versa.

Mulder. Just saying the name caused him to wince. He still wasn't sure what the hell had happened out there in those woods. One minute the tall, lanky agent had been standing only a few feet away from him and the next he had disappeared. At first Skinner thought he'd been playing a joke. He wouldn't have put it past him and then he'd looked up. He still couldn't come to grips with what he'd seen. He sighed heavily and remembered his words to Agent Scully.

"I won't deny what I saw. I can't." But he wanted to. He wanted to pretend none of it had ever happened, that he'd never let Alex Krycek into his office or taken him to see Mulder, that he and Mulder had never gotten on that plane to Bellefleur, Oregon, and that he'd insisted Mulder leave the whole damn thing alone. He was his superior for God's sake. He should have put his foot down if for no other reason than the tiny woman now changing to go home in the room behind him.

He hadn't wanted to leave her alone, not after the bombshell she'd dropped on him. He hadn't meant to look so absolutely shocked but when she'd said she was pregnant he couldn't help it. He had always been in the betting pool that his two star agents were not sleeping together, that they were consummate professionals and that they would never risk their partnership by giving in to physical desire. Well, he'd obviously been flat out wrong. He didn't feel too bad. No one else had really known either. He'd noticed small things about them that glared at him now. They had stopped touching each other. He knew Mulder was a touchy person, well where Scully was concerned at least. His hands were usually somewhere on her person at all times, either at the small of her back, her elbow, or the back of her neck. He seemed to need constant contact with her. For the past few months Skinner had noticed that he'd seemed to be desperately trying not to touch her in public. Now he knew why. They hadn't wanted anyone to know. They had known that if anyone found out they would have more than likely been split up and Mulder would rather slit his throat than be separated from Scully.

The jealousy that rose up in Skinner was not surprising. There had been a time when he'd entertained the thought that maybe Scully might see him as something more than just her boss. He laughed humorously to himself. Yeah right. What's a candle to the sun? Mulder far outshone him in her eyes. He'd been absolutely fooling himself to think otherwise. And now, he'd lost her universe in the dense woods of Oregon. He had been afraid she would never forgive him but in that Scully way she had. She had understood that no less than an act of God would have kept Mulder from going in search of his ever elusive proof.

Skinner shifted in the hard chair and looked back towards the room where Scully was staying. She couldn't have shocked him more if she'd told him she had grown a new head. He'd been speechless. She'd seemed about to explain but he had simply told her he'd be back the next day to take her home and fled the room. He hadn't wanted to hear how it happened or for how long it had been going on. He didn't want to know how a woman who was proclaimed barren could now be carrying the child of the man she was obviously deeply in love with. He hadn't let her

explain. He hadn't been enough of a man to stay and listen. She had considered him a confidante. She had told no one else but him, not even her own mother. And he had fled. He wasn't good at sharing, especially things he particularly didn't want to hear, but he should have stayed. He had lost the father of her child and couldn't even stick around to let her grieve about it. Some friend he was. He sighed again.

The door to her room swung open and she came out carrying an overnight case. She looked pale. She was always fair, but she looked downright ghostly this morning. Bad choice of words. She had yet to make eye contact with him. She went to the nurses' station to sign herself out and he saw her wave away a wheelchair. No, she'd leave here standing. She finally looked up and met his gaze. She'd been crying. That's why she'd been avoiding him. She didn't want him to feel bad. Get that. She didn't want him to feel bad. He suddenly felt as if someone had punched him in the stomach and he couldn't catch his breath. Her eyes were red and swollen and her face was ashen. She walked slowly over to him and stopped when she stood close.

"Thank you for being here, sir." They were back to that now. He was her superior once again.

"Agent Scully, it's the absolute least I can do. Here, let me take that." He grabbed her overnight bag and slung it over one broad shoulder and took her elbow to lead her to the elevator. He looked down when she didn't move. She was staring at his hand on her sleeve. Oh, God, she was remembering another man doing the same. He could see the tears well up in her eyes once again. She shook her head as if to clear it and he could see her resolve strengthening. She wouldn't become weak over this.

In the parking garage he opened her door and got her settled into his own car. They pulled out and he was surprised when she said she wasn't going to her apartment. He wanted to deny her when she told him to go towards Mulder's. They drove in silence. He knew this was a bad idea. If anything she needed to distance herself from Mulder for a while until she could handle it. He knew she was strong. Everyone knew that, but this was different. He didn't question her though. He would be there to pick up the pieces for her if she couldn't handle it. He wouldn't run away this time.

They pulled up in front of Mulder's apartment building and for the longest time she just sat there. He didn't force her to get out or to leave. He would let her decide when she was ready. She finally reached for the door handle and got out. He followed her into the elevator and up to the fourth floor. She fumbled for her key for a minute and finally took a deep breath and opened the door. She stood in the hallway for a bit, scared to go in. She knew the emotional storm she would not be able to stop once she entered and could see his things and smell his scent. One foot at a time she moved into the dim foyer and switched on the lights. It hit her harder than she thought. She could smell him everywhere. Images assaulted her senses. Images of the last few months they had shared in this place. Always this place. His couch, his blanket, the one he had wrapped around her so gently when she had fallen asleep on his couch after baring a huge part of her soul to him, his books, his magazines, even his clothes left thrown on the floor in his hurry packing. She walked forward and picked up a cotton T-shirt from the back of a chair. She knew she shouldn't but she could not stop herself. She held it to her nose and

breathed deeply of the fabric and immediately started to cry. The sobs wracked her small frame until she could no longer stand. She sat down heavily in the chair and doubled over until her head was resting on her knees. She felt as if her insides had been torn out, as if her soul had been violently ripped from her body. She was, after all, only half of a whole now.

Through all this, Skinner stood within reach but not interfering. He had known this would happen. It was too soon. It seemed like she cried for hours but it was only minutes. No one could break down like that for long without passing out. She sat there in that chair hunched over as if the weight of the world was on her tiny shoulders and just held the cloth in her trembling hands.

"What am I supposed to do without him?" She whispered. Now Skinner felt a sheen of tears in his own eyes. He came towards her and bent down on one knee until he was eye level with her. He took one of her ice cold hands in his and squeezed it gently.

"We will find him, Scully. Together we will search this whole planet over if we have to but we will find him. He wants to get back to you as much as you want him to come back. With two wills like that there's no force on earth that can stop it from happening." I didn't know where I got the words; they were just there. She actually looked hopeful.

"He doesn't even know. He doesn't know he has more than me to come home to."

"You're enough, Scully. Believe me, you are enough." She gave him a slight smile.

"I don't know if I can make it through this."

"You can. You have to. You have to be ready for him when he gets back. And I'm going to need your help in the search. Put your mind on that Scully. Put everything into that." She nodded.

"I need some time."

"Take all the time you need. I'll be waiting for you when you're ready to get started." Skinner promised.

"Thank you, sir." He simply squeezed her hand and stood up. He turned and walked to the door. He stopped at the doorway and turned back to look at her. She sat up straighter now. She was wiping the tears from her cheeks with the back of her hand and trying to compose herself.

"Are you sure you want to stay here alone, Agent Scully? I can still run you home or to your mother's." Skinner wanted to insist but the look in her blue eyes was his answer before she even spoke. She looked slowly around the apartment and breathed deeply.

"I belong here," she said softly. Skinner nodded and walked out the door, closing it softly behind him.

End  
file.